MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kapur.... You are not asking a question. That is all right. Next question.

Categorisation of persons uprooted from Merapani area

*45. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:† SHRI S. W. DHABE:

Will the Minister of HOME AFIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the people who became homeless during the trouble in the Merapani area last June, are Rajbansis who are categorised as Scheduled Castes in West Bengal from where they had migrated to this area in Assam where they are not categorised as Scheduled Castes, if so, what led to this change in categorisation; and

(b) what steps are being taken to solve this anomaly and rehabilitate them in the area from where they have now been rendered homeless?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): (a) As in rest of the State the population in the Merapani area is a mixed one.

It is a fact that the Rajbansis are categorised as Scheduled Castes in West Bengal and not so in Assam. In accordance with the provision of Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are specified in relation to a particular area/State.

(b) As a result of steps taken to restore normalcy, most of the people displaced as a result of the clashes have returned to their respective places. The State Government are undertaking necessary relief and rehabilitation measures. A Central team has been deputed to assess the damage and to recommend the quantum of Central assistance to be given to the State Government towards relief and rehabilitation. In the meanwhile, the State Government have been given a Ways and Means Advance of Rs. 50 lakhs to meet the emergent expenditure. Besides, a sum of Rs. 15 lakhs has been released from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

French help to make Ganga free from pollution

*46. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of France have recently offered to the Government of India their help to make river Ganga free from pollution;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether the Government of India propose to accept the offer?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of India and France have agreed to increase bilateral cooperation in the exchange of technical and scientific information and promoting joint research and development programmes in the field of extraction of energy from effluents, urban waste and agricultural residues. France has proposed to extend financial and technical assistance for mutually agreed projects especially for the site of Banaras. A memorandum of Understanding to this effect was signed on 9th June, 1985.

† This question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Ashwani Kumar.